

BEAR SMART WORKSHOP

Feb. 9 & 10, 2006 Richmond, BC

SUMMARY REPORT

Sunshine Valley has 'bear issues'. As a resident, a parent, and a wildlife lover, these issues concern me deeply. BC's "Bear Smart" Community program is a proactive strategy for addressing such issues and my goal is to encourage it's application in Sunshine Valley wherever possible. The Bear Smart program addresses the root causes of bear/human conflicts and lays out a strategy for diminishing the potential for bear/human conflicts. The criteria for communities to achieve "Bear Smart" Status are as follows:

1. Prepare a **Hazard Assessment** of community and surrounding area:
 - identify/map out bear habitat in the area: travel corridors, denning grounds, food sources, etc.
 - map out bear attractants within community: orchards, berry patches, garbage dumpsters, etc
 - map out history of bear/human conflicts.
2. Prepare a bear/human conflict **management plan** that is designed to reduce bear hazards and resolve the potential for conflict.
 - assess costs; format recommendations; implement process for enacting management plan; establish budget.

Example of possible recommendations for SV: regular brush cutting around playground and trails; harvest apples or get rid of the trees.

3. **Revise planning and decision-making** documents; ie - the "Official Community Plan" must reflect the considerations of the 'hazard assessment' and the 'conflict management plan'. Revise zoning, implement covenants, etc. Reference: "Smart Growth".
4. Implement a **continuing education program** directed at all sectors of the community:
 - signage/pamphlets
 - **"Bear Aware"** : as per Jacques Drisdoll, Provincial Coordinator for "Bear Aware", we are 3rd on waiting list for the provincially funded "Bear Aware" Education program. They are waiting for this years funding to be established.
5. Develop and maintain a **bear-proof municipal solid waste** management system. This is the #1 bear attractant/conflict hazard.
 - **Cheers to those involved in already taking care of that for SV!**
 - there are a range of bear-proof containers on the market - garbage containers, as well as food storage containers....see pamphlets.
6. Implement "Bear Smart" **bylaws** and a **compliance strategy**:
 - devise bylaws for 'bear safe' requirements of food storage, garbage storage; regulations on bird feeders, composting, etc.
 - implement the ability to enforce compliance with those bylaws.

Upon full compliance with the Bear Smart program communities will be given other bear management options if required, such as Hazing or Aversive conditioning.

I hope the SVRA will agree that it is in everyone's best interest to support "Bear Smart" for Sunshine Valley. My next project will be to get 'bear-smarts' signage for our neighborhood. Help with accomplishing this would be much appreciated.

Best regards,

Donna McBride